

Fw: America's Green Economy versus the Proposed Superfund

Sabrina Forrest to: Richard Sisk, David Ostrander, Johanna Miller, Martin Hestmark, Carol Campbell, rudy.mike, Steven Way

01/20/2011 08:54 AM

From: Sabrina Forrest/R8/USEPA/US

To:

More news from Todd Hennis

Sincerely,

Sabrina Forrest
NPL Coordinator &
Site Assessment Manager
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1595 Wynkoop Street, Mail Code: 8EPR-B
Denver, CO 80202-1129
Direct Ph: 303-312-6484
Toll Free: 1 800-227-8917, 312-6484
Fax: 303-312-6065
Agency Cell: 303-589-1286

E-mail: forrest.sabrina@epa.gov

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----- Forwarded by Sabrina Forrest/R8/USEPA/US on 01/20/2011 08:51 AM -----

From: Todd Hennis <mogul1882@yahoo.com>

To: Peter Butler <pbutler@wildblue.net>, Ali Morse <morseali@yahoo.com>, Andrew Ross <andrew.ross@state.co.us>, Anglo Saxon Properties <anglo-saxon@cox.net>, avalpro@theglobal.net, Barb Hite <Barbara_Hite@hotmail.com>, Barb Horn <barb.horn@state.co.us>, Bill Dunkelberger <Bill_dunkelberger@blm.gov>, Bill Goodhard <bill.goodhard@kinross.com>, Bill Jones <billjones@frontier.net>, Bill Simon <wsimon@frontier.net>, Bill Whiteside <bill@blueskytechnologies.biz>, Bob Owen <jrowenjr@comcast.net>, Bonie Pate <bbpate@smtpgate.dphe.state.co.us>, Briant Kimball <bkimball@usgs.gov>, Bruce Stover <bruce.stover@state.co.us>, Buck Skillen <fpope@bresnan.net>, Camille Price <camille.price@state.co.us>, Carol Russell/R8/USEPA/US@EPA, Chester Anderson <chester@bugsconsulting.com>, Chuck Wanner <cwanner@frontier.net>, Craig Gander <cgander@smtpgate.dphe.state.co.us>, Dan Beley <daniel.beley@state.co.us>, David Heinze <dheinze@environcorp.com>, Debbie Cokes <debbiecokes@montrose.net>, Don Gordon <gordon_d@fortlewis.edu>, Doug Ramsey <douglas.ramsey@co.usda.gov>, Doug Yager <dyager@usgs.gov>, Eric Elliott <ejelliott@fortlewis.edu>, Frank Baumgarner <fwbsenior@msn.com>, gautam Khanna <g.khanna@lxcgcore.com>, Ian Revo <ifrevo@fortlewis.edu>, Jack Rodgers <rogersoj@ci.durango.co.us>, Jen Ader <jen@silvertonmountain.com>, Jerry Sandell <sandellgjs36@aol.com>, John Whitney <john.whitney@mail.house.gov>, Jon Tuthill <tuthill@frontier.net>, Katie Walton-Day <kwaltond@usgs.gov>, Kay Zillich <cathleen_zillich@blm.gov>, Ken Portz <kportzla@aol.com>, Kirstin Brown

<kirstin.brown@state.co.us>, Kurt Johnson <kurt@tellurideenergy.com>, Larry Perino <larry.perino@kinross.com>, Lisa Richardson <grenadierglassworks@yahoo.com>, Loretta Pineda <loretta.pineda@state.co.us>, Marcie Bidwell <mbidwell@swca.com>, Mark Levin <mark.levin@minenv.com>, Mark Walker <mark@coloradobrownfieldsfoundation.org>, Matt Janowiak <matthew_janowiak@co.blm.gov>, Matt Sares <matt.sares@state.co.us>, Matthew Clark <m.clark@tu.org>, Meghan Maloney <meghan@sanjuancitizens.org>, Michael Holmes/R8/USEPA/US@EPA, Pat Willits <willits@independence.net>, Paul and Stacie Rapport <psrappa@yahoo.com>, Pete McKay <commckay@hotmail.com>, Peter Carver <pablo.james.carver@gmail.com>, Peter Miesler <citizenschallenge@gmail.com>, Ray Johnson <rhjohnso@usgs.gov>, Rob Robinson <gymnerd1@mac.com>, Rob Runkel <runkel@usgs.gov>, Ron Borrego <ron.borrego@amec.com>, Sabrina Forrest/R8/USEPA/US@EPA, San Juan County <sanjuancounty@frontier.net>, Shawna Bethell <shawnabethell@yahoo.com>, Stan Powers <spowers@uc.usbr.gov>, Stephanie Odell <stephanie_odell@co.blm.gov>, Steve Fearn <fearneng@rmi.net>, Steve Renner <steven.renner@state.co.us>, Steven Way/R8/USEPA/US@EPA, Tim Brown <timothy.brown@mesanetworks.net>, Tom Schillaci <biscuit@frontier.net>, Victoria Schmitt <schmittvl@co.laplata.co.us>, Wally Erickson <wally.erickson@state.co.us>

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Subject: America's Green Economy versus the Proposed Superfund

America's Green Economy versus the Proposed Upper Cement Creek Superfund Area

January 19, 2011

Dear Animas River Stakeholders Group Member

I think it's safe to say that everyone in the group realizes the coming importance of the green economy to the United States and to the world, but some people may not know that mining in the San Juans has the unique ability to keep the green economy moving, as foreign supplies of strategic minerals dry up and as the Country waits for other domestic supplies to come on line. That is why it is critical to find an alternative to superfunding Upper Cement Creek as a means of addressing area environmental issues.

I don't believe the EPA understands the full implications of superfunding the area. That's why I am writing this letter.

The looming Tellurium Crisis is a case in point. Here are the particulars.

On January 3, 2011 Timothy Gessert, Principal Scientist, National Center for Photovoltaics at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) gave a presentation in Denver titled: "Possible Tellurium requirements for Thin-film CdTe Photovoltaics and Some Thought on China's Impacts". In this talk, he stated the following:

1. 13 terrawatts of solar power may be installed in the U.S. by 2038
2. Currently, 65% of the solar market in the U.S. is met by thin film photovoltaics and thin film photovoltaics will produce the vast majority of solar power in the future.
3. To produce 1 gigawatt capacity of thin film solar power capacity requires 80 to 100 metric tons of tellurium

Note: 1000 gigawatts equals 1 terrawatt. So 13 terrawatts of installed capacity with 65% of capacity being CdTe panels would require 676,000 tons of tellurium.

Tellurium is the 5th rarest metal on earth. Annual world production of tellurium is about 400 tons per year. That's it. There is no primary source of tellurium in production in the United States today.

This explains why two solar panel companies based in Colorado, First Solar of Englewood and Abound Solar of Longmont are scouring the Country for sources of tellurium, including southwest Colorado.

The fact is that San Juan County is one of the few places on earth that has a large primary source of tellurium. It's called the Gold King Mine. In 1990, Dr. Bernhard Koch examined the large telluride resource at the Gold King and documented it extensively. In other words, the tellurium is there. Plus, the mine could be in production in a very short period of

time.

In fact, the Gold King appears to be the United States' only large, readily available source of tellurium. An initial estimate is that the Gold King contains 1000 tons of contained tellurium. This estimate could be low. There could well be much more.

If the E.P.A. is allowed to close off the Gold King by bulkheading, the mine can no longer be sampled, production becomes impossible, and the resource will be removed from the U.S. economy forever. The E.P.A. may argue that the mine could be re-entered in the future, but in practice once the mine is bulkheaded, it is lost to America.

In summary, domestic U.S. solar panel production will grind to a halt if tellurium becomes unavailable. That's why it's imperative to our Country that Upper Cement Creek not be declared a superfund site. I don't believe the EPA understands the full implications of superfunding the area. There are other practical and effective solutions to the Sunnyside Mine Pool problem that would not jeopardize U.S. solar panel production.

And tellurium is only one of many strategic minerals found in abundance in the San Juans and that could readily put into production. We have huge resources of cadmium, tungsten and indium in the Cement Creek area.

Please don't let the EPA unwittingly sell out the United States.

For The Gladstone Institute, Inc.

Todd C. Hennis, Pres.